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and Waste Disposal programs and support functions; and performs other activities as the Administrator or Deputy Administrator may prescribe from time to time.

(b) *Primary point of contact.* The State Rural Development Offices are the primary points of contact between RUS and loan and grant recipients.

(c) *The Engineering and Environmental Staff* is responsible for engineering staff activities at all stages of Water and Waste Disposal programs implementation, including review of preliminary engineering plans and specifications, procurement practices, contract awards, construction monitoring, and system operation and maintenance. This staff develops agency engineering practices, policies, guidelines, and technical data relating to the construction and operation of water and waste disposal systems, and for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, and other environmental requirements as they apply to all agency programs and activities.

[63 FR 16085, Apr. 2, 1998. Redesignated at 71 FR 8436, Feb. 17, 2006]

§ 1700.31 Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program.

RUS, through the Telecommunications Program, makes grants and loans to furnish and improve telemedicine services and distance learning services in rural areas.

(a) *The Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications Program*, directs and coordinates the distance learning and telemedicine program.

(b) *Primary point of contact with borrowers.* The area offices, described in § 1700.28(b) support the distance learning and telemedicine program. Each office administers the distance learning and telemedicine program for its assigned geographical area with assistance of field representatives located in areas assigned to them.

[63 FR 16085, Apr. 2, 1998; 63 FR 18307, Apr. 15, 1998. Redesignated at 71 FR 8436, Feb. 17, 2006]

§ 1700.32 Program Accounting and Regulatory Analysis.

RUS, through Program Accounting and Regulatory Analysis, monitors and administers applicable regulations,

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RUS policy, and accounting requirements. The staffs assist the Assistant Administrator with respect to management, information systems, budgets, and other such matters.

(a) *The Assistant Administrator, Program Accounting and Regulatory Analysis*, directs and coordinates program accounting and financial services with respect to electric and telecommunications borrowers and directs and coordinates the regulatory actions of the agency.

(b) This division monitors borrowers' accounting operations in order to ensure compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements and with the requirements of the Office of Management and Budget.

(c) The two regional branches (the Northern Region and the Southern Region) work directly with borrowers. Each regional office has a staff of headquarters and field accountants. The Technical Accounting and Auditing Staff monitors industry developments, including the standards of the Financial Accounting Standards Board, and recommends Agency policies and procedures.

(d) Program Development and Regulatory Analysis directs and administers the preparation, clearance, processing, and distribution of RUS submissions to the Office of the Federal Register in the form of proposed and final rules and notices and RUS bulletins and staff instructions.

[63 FR 16085, Apr. 2, 1998. Redesignated at 71 FR 8436, Feb. 17, 2006]

§ 1700.33 Financial Services Staff.

The Financial Services Staff evaluates the financial condition of financially troubled borrowers in order to protect the Government's interests.

[63 FR 16085, Apr. 2, 1998. Redesignated at 71 FR 8436, Feb. 17, 2006]

§ 1700.34 Assistance to High Energy Cost Rural Communities.

RUS, through the Electric Program, makes grants and loans to assist high energy cost rural communities. The Assistant Administrator, Electric Program, directs and coordinates the assistance to high energy cost rural communities program and serves as the

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primary point of contact for applicants, grantees, and borrowers.

[70 FR 5351, Feb. 2, 2005. Redesignated at 71 FR 8436, Feb. 17, 2006]

§§ 1700.35–1700.49 [Reserved]

Subpart C—Loan and Grant Approval Authorities

§§ 1700.50–1700.52 [Reserved]

§ 1700.53 Persons serving as Acting Administrator.

In accordance with procedures established in the RUS Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan, the following officials, in the order indicated below, shall act in the office of Rural Utilities Service Administrator in case of the Administrator's absence, or inability to act, until the absence or inability ceases.

(a) The Deputy Administrator is “first assistant” for purposes of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998 (5 U.S.C. § 3345–3349d) and shall, in the absence or disability of the Administrator, or in the event of a vacancy in the office of Administrator, serve as Acting Administrator, subject to the limitations established by law.

(b) In the event of the absence or disability of both the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator, or in the event of a vacancy in both the office of the Administrator and the Deputy Administrator, the official incumbents of the following positions shall, in the sequence shown, temporarily perform all of the functions and duties of the Administrator, except to the extent that such functions and duties may not be delegated by law.

(1) Chief of Staff.

(2) Assistant Administrator, Electric Program.

(3) Assistant Administrator, Water and Environmental Programs.

(4) Assistant Administrator, Telecommunications Programs.

(5) Assistant Administrator, Program Accounting and Regulatory Analysis.

(6) Community Programs Director of the Rural Development Kentucky State Office.

(c) Eligibility for succession to the position of RUS Administrator shall be limited to officially assigned incumbents of positions listed in paragraph

(b) of this section. Only officials specifically designated in the approved order of succession are eligible. Persons appointed on acting basis, or on some other temporary basis, are ineligible by virtue of so serving to serve as a successor. Therefore the order of succession would fall to the next designated official in the approved order of succession. The eligibility of the incumbent of paragraph (b)(6) of this section to serve as a successor is also limited to periods of national emergency declared by the President or during the activation of the RUS COOP plan.

(d) In the event of the absence or disability of the Administrator, or in the event that the Administrator's position is vacant, the Deputy Rural Utilities Service Administrator is the only RUS official authorized to serve as Acting Administrator. When serving as Acting Administrator, the Deputy Administrator is authorized to perform all of the functions and duties of the office of the Administrator, including those functions and duties that are required by statute or regulation to be performed exclusively by the Administrator. In the event of the absence or disability of both Administrator and the Deputy Administrator, or in the event that both the office of Administrator and Deputy Administrator are vacant, the officials in the order of succession indicated in paragraph (b) of this section shall perform all the functions and duties of the Administrator but may not serve as Acting Administrator.

(e) The Administrator retains the discretion to depart from the order in paragraph (b) for occasions where deviation from automatic succession is desired by the Administrator. Such temporary designations shall be in writing. Notwithstanding the provisions of this § 1710.53 not contained in this paragraph (e), the Administrator may delegate full or limited authority to perform the functions and duties of the office of Administrator except to the extent that such functions and duties may not be delegated by law.

(f) The Administrator may terminate the delegations under this section 1700.53, in whole or in part, at any